(a) whether Government plans to check sugar exports *via* advance licence;

(b) if so, whether under this licence scheme sugar millers will have to obtain his Ministry's release orders for shipping out any consignment;

(c) whether India is still facing shortage of sugar;

(d) whether Government is also planning to extend Release Orders (RO) dispensation to cover re-export commitments under Advance Licence (AL) scheme and the scheme also requires mills to re-export one tonne of white sugar for every 1.05 tonnes of raw-sugar they import duty free; and

(e) if so, to what extent it has helped to check sugar exports?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (e) The Central Government in its decision dated 28.01.2009 has allowed sugar mills to import raw sugar under Advance Authorization Scheme upto 30.09.2009 and permitted sugar factories to sell processed raw sugar in the domestic market and fulfill export obligation on 'ton-to-ton' basis. A wastage of 5% has been allowed under Standard Input Output Norms (SION-52) on import of raw sugar and export of white sugar.

The sugar production in India is cyclic in nature; two-to-three years of high production are followed by two-to-three years of low production. The production of sugar is likely to be less than the consumption but keeping in view large opening stock in the beginning of the season, there would be adequate availability of sugar in the current sugar season.

The requirement of obtaining release orders for export of sugar under Open General Category has been re-introduced with effect from 01.01.2009 and for export of sugar under Advance Authorization Scheme with effect from 13.02.2009. This would enable the Government to judiciously issue export release orders whether under Open General License or under Advance Authorization Scheme.

Since the requirement of obtaining export release order has been re-introduced a few days back, it is too early to assess its impact.

Infected Ice-cream

†*86.SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that according to the Indian Council of Medical Research, the tests of samples of ice-creams have been found infected;

(b) if so, the number of samples taken and how many of them were found infected and the details thereof; and

(c) the efforts being made to improve the quality of ice-creams?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS): (a) and (b) As per the information available, Indian Council of Medical Research has not tested any samples of ice-cream. However, a letter has been published in Indian Journal of Medical Research wherein

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

bacteriological profile of softee ice-cream sold at retail outlets in Mangalore city of Karnataka was studied. A total 90 samples were tested, out of which 19, 4 and 2 showed contamination with E.coli, Staphylococcus aureus and Enterococcus faecalis respectively.

(c) The Food (Health) Authority of the States/U.Ts. who are responsible for implementation of Prevention of Food Adulteration Act in their State/U.T., have been requested to keep a strict vigil on quality of ice-cream. Any violation of the provision of the Act/Rules attracts legal action.

Violation of PNDT Act

*88. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of female foetuses aborted in the country in violation of Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PNDT) Act in the last two years, State-wise; and

(b) the details of action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS): (a) and (b) Sex determination techniques have been in use in India since 1975 primarily for the determination of genetic abnormalities. However, these techniques were widely misused to determine the sex of the foetus and subsequent abortions if the foetus was found to be female.

Studies indicate that sex determination tests are conducted and female foeticide carried out surreptitiously with the active connivance of the service providers and the persons seeking such services. Unlike other cases, both parties gain through such complicity, *i.e.* while the service seekers are able to get rid of the unwanted female foetus, the service providers benefit financially. The absence of witness to such unholy alliance or evidence thereto makes detection and compilation of data regarding such violations of the Act difficult. However, according to the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB), 125 and 96 cases were registered during 2006 and 2007 respectively for foeticide.

With a view to overcoming such circumvention of the law, the implementing agencies, as also the NGOs and other organisations, are encouraged to employ decoy customers for trapping such unscrupulous service providers and book cases against them under the law.

Further, the Government has taken action on strengthening the Pre-Conception & Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act (PC & PNDT Act) as well as creating awareness on the issue through various IEC mechanisms. Some of the steps taken by the Government to improve the Child Sex Ratio in the Country are:

- Constitution of the Central Supervisory Board under the Chairmanship of Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare, whose function, *inter alia,* is to advise the Central Government on policy matters relating to use of pre-natal diagnostic techniques, sex selection techniques and against their misuse and to create public awareness against the practice of pre-conception sex selection and pre-natal determination of sex of foetus leading to female foeticide;